

Sierra Nevada Conservancy-Progress Report
Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control
River and Coastal Protection Act of 2008 (Proposition 84)

Grantee Name: **Alpine Watershed Group**

Project title: **Markleeville Creek Restoration Project**

SNC Reference Number: 365 **Submittal Date:** 3/27/14

Report Preparer: Sarah Green **Phone#:** 530-694-2327

Check one:

6 **6-Month Progress Report**

X **Final Report**

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| 6-Month Progress Reports should reflect the previous six months. Final Reports should reflect the entire grant period. |
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A. Progress Report Summary: *(Please provide a general description of work completed during this reporting period.)*

Past 8 Months

Work this reporting period focused on land acquisition and final design guidance. The key outcomes include the following:

- One Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting on 10/24 with 12 representatives in attendance; review of 90% design
- Presentation to Alpine County Planning Commission on 10/8; solicitation of support and recommendation to Board of Supervisors successful
- Presentation to Alpine County Board of Supervisors on 11/5; received approval for all project features and overall design
- 90% design review and site meetings with key TAC representatives and Project Consultant on 12/5 and 12/19.
- Land acquisition went through on 12/23 (funding from the California River Parkways Grant Program)
- Implementation funding continues to be sought; several large sources currently being pursued, including Integrated Regional Water Management (IWRM) funding and Leviathan mine mitigation monies

The work completed over the duration of the grant is summarized in the next section.

B. Deliverables or Outcomes completed during this Reporting Period or Milestones

Achieved: *(Include specific information, such as public meetings held, agency participation, partnerships developed, or acres mapped, treated or restored.)*

All grant deliverables were accomplished. A summary of project outcomes is as follows:

- A total of 4 TAC meetings were held to guide the planning process and review project outcomes.
- A total of 21 individuals participated on the TAC over the past 2 years, representing 11 partner organizations and permitting agencies.

- One Community Meeting was held with 23 community participants.
- Over 900 residents were reached via a mailer with basic information about the project and an invitation to the Community Meeting.
- Two press releases were printed in several partner newsletters and local newspaper.
- At least 70 community members received a project flyer with details about the purpose and design.
- Project support letters were received from 4 key partners - the Alpine County Chamber of Commerce, Friends of Hope Valley, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board and MPUD, indicating partners' on-going commitment to the effort.
- One formal MOU was developed between the County and MPUD in order to outline mutual agreements and working relationship.
- 95% Restoration Design Plans and Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for CEQA were completed.

C. Challenges or Opportunities Encountered: *(Please describe what has worked and what hasn't; include any solutions you initiated to resolve problems. If your project is not on schedule, please explain why here.)*

Past 8 Months

In the final months of the grant, the project encountered one setback. When the 90% design plans were submitted to the TAC in September 2013, it became clear that there had been miscommunication regarding two primary project elements – size of the floodplain and retention of existing vegetation. The Consultant had designed the floodplain to encompass all of the low-lying area in order to maximize the hydrologic benefits. However, this required the removal of much existing vegetation. Significant design changes were made in order to accommodate project needs, resulting in a schedule delay. It also put the consultants under great pressure to meet the project end date of February 28th. Luckily Cardno Entrix was able to complete all deliverables within the identified schedule and was willing to put in additional time after the grant end date.

The project also experienced one opportunity. In regards to the project budget, it was determined that there was remaining funding in certain budget line items. A budget amendment allowed this additional funding to be moved to the Project Consultant line item for use on additional effort with restoration design. Given that the key steps remaining for final design revolve around the sewer layout, the Project Manager decided to provide additional funding for support from the Markleeville PUD (MPUD). The engineer's invoice indicates a great deal of in-kind time provided for finish this work.

Grant Duration

The following have been our primary challenges:

- Sewer system – Improvements to the sewer system are essential to the long term water quality benefits of the restoration project. But addressing it comprehensively has posed a challenge given the significant cost and timing of the solution. The cost estimate for the whole restoration project is approaching \$2 million. This may require more than one funding source for implementation, resulting in the need to divide the project into phases.

- Project phasing - The need for project implementation phasing poses a significant challenge. The TAC considered the technical sequencing requirements of the major project elements (sewer, restoration and recreational features), along their total cost estimates, and recognized that multiple funding sources may be required and/or may be suited to the major components of the project.
- Project schedule - Adjustments and accommodations had to be made in the project schedule and deliverables due to the delay in land acquisition. Project Consultant has had to increase project management and administration costs given the extended time frame.

D. Unanticipated Successes Achieved: *(Please describe any additional successes beyond completing scheduled tasks or meeting scheduled milestones.)*

Submission of this project as part of the Tahoe Sierra IRWM grant proposal to DWR was a huge accomplishment for this project. We had great support from the MPUD Engineer and Alpine County Community Development Director with project description and budget development. The grant application moved the project team forward in the development of a phasing plan for implementation and associated cost estimates. The proposal would fund the first step in project implementation - Phase 3A: Sewer System Modifications and Pre-Project Baseline Monitoring - in the amount of \$689,565

Other unanticipated successes include the following:

- Collaboration with the Markleeville PUD (MPUD) providing a significant benefit for broad community support.
- Support from a local artist to generate a rendition of the future restoration project.

E. Compare Actual Costs to Budgeted Costs: *(Please refer to your grant agreement to list your deliverables/budget categories and budgeted costs compared to actual costs incurred during this reporting period in the table below.)*

| Project Budget Categories | Original Budget | Revised Budget | Spent to Date |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Project Management salary | \$32,000.00 | \$33,600.00 | \$33,417.00 |
| Contracts/Consultants | \$165,000.00 | \$169,992.86 | \$169,773.91 |
| Printing | \$1,000.00 | \$507.14 | \$507.14 |
| Performance Measures | \$1,600.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| Administrative | \$21,100.00 | \$16,600.00 | \$16,676.59 |
| Total | \$220,700.00 | \$220,700.00 | \$220,374.64 |

Explanation: There is a minor overage in the Administrative line item due to an inaccuracy in final invoicing period projections.

F. Do you have information to report on the project-specific Performance Measures for your project? *(If so, please list the Performance Measures below and describe your progress.)*

PM reporting included on final page of this report.

G. Were there any other relevant materials produced under the terms of this Agreement that are not a part of the budgeted deliverables? If so, please attach copies. *(Include digital photos, maps, media coverage of project, or other work products.)*

N/A

H. Next Steps: *(Work anticipated in the next 6 months, including location and timing of any scheduled events related to the project.)*

See “Post Grant Plans” below

Please Complete this Section for FINAL Report ONLY

Capacity-Building Results and Collaboration and Cooperation with Stakeholders: *(What partnerships did you initiate or strengthen as a result of this project? How did they affect the project outcome? If applicable, how did this grant increase your organization’s capacity? What is your plan to sustain this increase?)*

Our greatest success continues to be our partnership with the Markleeville PUD. They have been highly cooperative in working with AWG on this project. Their involvement has allowed AWG to ascertain that any sewer alternatives considered will meet their approval. Sewer system benefits that may be addressed in this project include improved access to lift station and safeguards at the lift station (flood inundation, site security and emergency power). They have also committed their support to collaboratively seek funding for the project. With MPUD cooperation, the Markleeville Creek Restoration Project will effectively serve as a longer-term community investment.

This grant has increased AWG’s capacity by providing partial funding for AWG’s Senior Watershed Coordinator. AWG’s ability to manage large grants and projects has also increased. This project helped strengthen and formalize AWG’s community partnerships. Four partners submitted support letters which solidified partner commitment to the effort. The TAC has also played a crucial role in collaboration and community outreach.

Description of Project Accomplishments:

1. Most Significant Accomplishment

Describe in one concise, well-written paragraph, the most significant accomplishment that resulted from this grant.

Our greatest success continues to be our partnership with the Markleeville PUD. They have been highly cooperative in working with AWG on this project. Their involvement has allowed AWG to ascertain that any sewer alternatives considered will meet their approval. Sewer system benefits that may be addressed in this project include improved access to lift station and safeguards at the lift station (flood inundation, site security and emergency power). They have also committed their support to collaboratively seek funding for the project. With MPUD cooperation, the Markleeville Creek Restoration Project will effectively serve as a longer-term community investment.

2. WOW Factor

If applicable, please describe anything that happened as a result of the project or during the project that is particularly impressive.

Bringing the community's attention to this project has enhanced Alpine County's awareness of watershed restoration. The project's multiple benefits have enhanced the community's perception of the project. The restoration of this site will not only improve the natural system functions of the Markleeville Creek watershed, it will provide a valuable scenic and recreational resource for residents and visitors. There are limited opportunities to educate the public about our scenic and environmental resources. Locating an interpretive nature trail adjacent to downtown businesses will be a positive draw to the area. The project will showcase environmental stewardship in downtown Markleeville.

3. Design and Implementation

When considering the design and implementation of this project, what lessons did you learn that might help other grantees implement similar work?

Our primary lessons focused on overseeing a large project and managing a project consultant. Here are few suggestions:

- Keep close tabs on the schedule throughout the project
- Identify clear expectations and maintain communications with project consultants
- Identify the primary goal for the project consultant, including any key outcomes that are non-negotiable
- Be sure to get all of the details down in writing regarding design elements before consultant goes to the drawing board

4. Indirect Impact

Please describe any indirect benefits of the project such as information that has been developed as a result of the project is being used by several other organizations to improve decision-making, or a conservation easement funded by this grant that encouraged other landowners in the area to have conservation easements on their property.

The project has provided a few indirect benefits to Alpine County. The MPUD has expressed the value of this project to sewer infrastructure needs. Also, once implemented, the project will provide a significant value to downtown revitalization plans and economic viability. It will highlight a key scenic resource in downtown Markleeville. It intends to

provide an interpretive nature trail, fishing access and picnic grounds for public benefit. These resources will enhance the tourist visitation to Markleeville and Alpine County.

5. Collaboration and Conflict Resolution

If you worked in collaboration or cooperation with other organizations or institutions, describe those arrangements and their importance to the project. Also, describe if you encountered conflict in the project and how you dealt with it, or if there was conflict avoided as a result of the project.

Successful partner collaboration has been critical to the success of the project. On-going communication and meetings amongst TAC members allowed for agreement to be found regarding key design elements. Site visits facilitated communication and discussion about challenges and decisions. Regular presentations to and collaboration with the Alpine County Board of Supervisor meetings built the community's faith in the project. These efforts culminated with the development and approval of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County, AWG and the Markleeville Public Utility District.

6. Capacity-Building

SNC is interested in both the capacity of your organization, as well as local and regional capacity. Please describe the overall health of your organization including areas in need of assistance. SNC is interested in the strength and involvement of your board, significant changes to your staff, size and involvement of membership. In addition, describe how your project improved capabilities of partners, or the larger community.

Alpine County, as the new land owner and lead agency, continues to demonstrate their support and their commitment to the project. The Alpine Watershed Group has a strong board and staff commitment in this project. Three of the five current board members are on the TAC. AWG has been researching funding sources for project implementation. Also AWG's role as a community-based, collaborative organization is proving to be a significant strength for the project and for community collaboration. AWG is currently facing financial challenges. As of now, AWG's available funding resources drops to 30% of our monthly budget on July 1 and down to 20% on October 1. Great effort is being put into diversifying the organization's funding.

This project has helped bring watershed restoration to light in Alpine County. The project's multiple benefits have enhanced the community's perception of the project. The restoration of this site will not only improve the natural system functions of the Markleeville Creek watershed, it will provide a valuable scenic and recreational component for our downtown. The project serves as an important economic resource to our community as we are striving to improve our downtown area. There are limited opportunities to educate the public about our scenic and environmental resources. Locating an interpretive nature trail adjacent to downtown businesses will be a positive draw to the area.

7. Challenges

Did the project face internal or external challenges? How were they addressed? Describe each challenge and any actions that you took to address it. Was there something that SNC

did or could have done to assist you? Did you have to change any of your key objectives in response to conditions “on the ground”?

One significant internal challenge has been in knowing how to hire and manage an outside consultant. Considerable effort was put into the development of a comprehensive Scope of Work for our project consultant with great detail regarding deliverables and schedule. Unfortunately the reality of the project led to schedule delays and the needs for deliverable modification. The primary lesson from this has been to manage the schedule from the end back, in order to ensure sufficient time for deliverable completion and partner review.

8. Photographs

Grantees are strongly encouraged to submit photos, slides or digital images whenever possible. These images will be used for SNC publications such as annual reports or on the website. Please make sure you clearly identify location, activity, and your project with each submitted image. Images will be credited to the submitting organization, unless specified otherwise.

Attached is a summary of project photos.

9. Post Grant Plans

What are the post-grant plans for the project if it does not conclude with the grant? Include a description of the following (if applicable): (1) Changes in operations or scope; (2) Replication or use of findings; (3) Names of other organizations you expect to involve; (4) Plans to support the project financially, and; (5) Communication plans?

The final steps in the planning stage will involve completion of the sewer design and any necessary modifications to the CEQA document. Project leaders and TAC members will maintain communications and continue their search for implementation funding. The ongoing support of the Technical Advisory Committee will be critical to maintain cohesion over the coming months. Continued efforts around building public awareness and community involvement in the project will also be essential.

10. Post Grant Contact

Who can be contacted a few years from now to follow up on the project? Please provide name and contact information.

Sarah Green will continue to be the primary project contact. In the event that she is no longer with AWG, the primary contact would be the AWG Board Chairman and Alpine County Director of Community Development. Here are the current contacts in those positions:

John Barr, AWG Chairman
jwbarr@earthlink.net
(925) 698-6249 (cell)

Brian Peters, Alpine County Community Development Director
bpeters@alpinecountyca.gov
(530) 694-2140 office

SNC-approved Performance Measures: (Please list each Performance Measure for your Project, as identified in your Grant Agreement, and the results/outcomes.)

Number of People Reached

Community outreach and input has been a key component of the planning and design for this restoration project. The following are the primary mechanisms incorporated into the project and an estimate of number reached:

- Community Presentations
 - Board of Supervisors meetings – 50 Alpine County residents
 - Planning Commission meeting – 10 Alpine County residents
 - Various local groups/organizations – 20 Alpine County residents
- Community Meeting – 23 Alpine County residents
- Meeting Flyer – 70 Alpine County residents and visitors
- Meeting Mailer - 900 Alpine County residents
- Newspaper articles & newsletter articles:
 - Alpine Threads newsletter – 350 Alpine County residents
 - Carson River Flow newsletter – 200 regional stakeholders from throughout Carson River Watershed
 - Record Courier – 4,700 regional residents and visitors
 - Tahoe Daily Tribune – 7,700 regional residents and visitors

Dollar Value of Resources Leveraged for the Sierra Nevada

This SNC grant has been able to leverage additional funding for the MCRP from various sources and grantors. The following is a summary of these additional funding sources and the specific amount allocated toward project management and monitoring coordinator over the duration of the SNC grant:

- California River Parkways Grant Program for land acquisition - \$136,000
- California Department of Conservation Watershed Coordinator Grant Program - \$6,500
- Carson Water Subconservancy District - \$5,500
- Resource Advisory Committee funding under Title II of the Secure Rural Schools Act - \$10,000

This totals \$158,000 in cash match for project implementation.

The following are the in-kind contributions for professional project planning support over the duration of the grant:

- Technical Advisory Committee members: 170 hrs @ \$32/hr - \$5,440
- Alpine County Director of Community Development: 90 hrs @ \$100/hr - \$9,000
- Markleeville PUD Engineer: consultant's estimate of project costs provided as match 50 hrs @ \$120/hr - \$6,000
- Cardno Entrix: consultant's estimate of project costs provided as match - \$30,000

This totals \$50,440 of in-kind project support.

Number and Type of Jobs Created

Funding from the SNC grant has providing funding one temporary part-time (~ 30%) project management position with the Alpine Watershed Group. It also has provided contract work for local and regional consultants – specifically the Markleeville PUD Engineer and Cardno Entrix’s environmental consulting team.

Number of New, Improved or Preserved Economic Activities

This project once implemented will provide new economic resources for Markleeville and Alpine County in the form of public recreation and scenic resources. It will highlight a key scenic resource in downtown Markleeville. It intends to provide an interpretive nature trail, fishing access and picnic grounds for public benefit. These resources will enhance the economy to Markleeville and Alpine County.

Number of Collaboratively Developed Plans and Assessments

This project has involved additional data, assessment and planning with the following outcomes:

- 95% Restoration Design Plan Set and Technical Specifications
- Draft Initial Study/ Mitigation Negative Declaration
- New Hydrologic Data Set and HEC RAS Model